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THE PUBLICATION OF THE
FLORA OF CHINA WILL
BE A GREAT CONTRIBUTION
TO THE SCIENTIFIC
CIRCLES OF THE WORLD

Opening speech by
Professor Wu, Zheng-Yi¹ at the
second editorial meeting for the
joint *Flora of China* project,
Guangzhou, Guangdong, China,
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The first book of the *Flora Reipublicae Popularis Sinicae* (FRPS) (volume 2) was published as a gift to the tenth anniversary of the People's Republic of China (Ching, 1959). Thirty years have passed since then. Although we lost seven years during the Cultural Revolution, Chinese botanists have worked hard under various difficult conditions. Up to now, more than half of the FRPS has been published or is in press. Most of the remaining volumes have been completed, and only a few are in the middle stages of writing. The complete work is planned to be published within ten years; thus we shall give this monumental work to the world in the year 2000. While the FRPS is being prepared, botanists in every province or district are very actively preparing floras of their own regions. For example, the floras of Hainan, Jiangsu, Hubei, Xizang, and the herbaceous plants of northeast China have been published. *Flora of Mount Hen-*

duan has been submitted to the publisher. Floras of the remaining provinces or districts are presently being written or are partially published. These floras have added or will add new information to the FRPS. For various reasons very few plant specimens from Taiwan and Hongkong have been available as we compile the FRPS. We have had to use information in the literature in cases when herbarium materials are inadequate. Problems that still could not be solved have had to be set aside until additional information is available. We are very glad that the *Flora of Taiwan* has been completed and now is being revised, and that the *Flora of Hongkong* is being compiled under the direction of Dr. Shiu-ying Hu at the Chinese University of Hongkong. We would like to thank members of the biology department of the Chinese University of Hongkong and Dr. Shiu-ying Hu for giving many excellent plant specimens to the herbarium of the Institute of Botany at Beijing. We hope that in the near future our colleagues in Taiwan can give us Taiwanese plant specimens or can exchange specimens with us.

The *Flora of China* (FOC) is a joint project by Chinese and American botanists and is based on the FRPS. The FOC will be another monumental work, in English and different from the FRPS. FOC

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will have more or less complete information on specimens from Hongkong and Taiwan. The Chinese and American botanists have experience writing floras of large areas, so we are confident that the joint project can be carried out as planned and that the *Flora of China* can be published. It will be useful to persons worldwide who are concerned with Chinese plants. We thank the Chinese government's open policy, which has made this joint project possible, has given us the opportunity to make friends with our foreign colleagues, and has allowed scientific exchange with our Hongkong and Taiwan colleagues. Our academic exchange and cooperation with colleagues in America and other countries has promoted and will continue to promote the progress of science in China. When we are together with our American and Hongkong colleagues today, we are very pleased that the FRPS is near completion, floras of various provinces and districts in China are coming up like bamboo shoots after a spring rain, the *Flora of Taiwan* is under revision for a second edition, and the *Flora of Hongkong* is being written.

The achievement in plant systematics in China has also promoted the development of plant floristic geography. China has a rich flora that not only has an ancient origin, but also has a very complicated history of migration and merging. The Chinese flora has attracted the attention of botanists all over the world. Many foreign scholars have come to China to investigate and study the flora of China during the last century. Since the 1920s, the Chinese botanists Hsen-Hsu Hu, Tcheng-ngo Liou, and Hui-lin Li have published many books and articles on the Chinese flora, probing into the origin of the flora of certain regions in China and the relationships between the flora of East Asia and North America (Hu, 1936, 1948; Li, 1944, 1950, 1952, 1953a–c, 1957; Liou, 1934, 1944, 1955). These botanists made great contributions, but because the floras of many regions were not known in great detail, the conclusions they made were unavoidably simple and sketchy. With the large-scaled field expeditions after 1949, we have collected a large number of plant specimens, which have made possible the publication of many monographs on plant genera and families. Compiling the FRPS and floras of various provinces and districts has laid the foundations for studying the flora of China.

I have preliminarily summarized previous work on the flora of China and described the floristic characteristics of the distributional types and sub-

types of Chinese seed plants, and their integrating relationships (Wu, 1963, 1965; Wu & Wang, 1983). Professor Zhang, Hong-da of Sun-yat-sen University also has published an article on the origin and development of the Chinese flora in which he differs from my opinions (Zhang, 1980). In order to make a thorough study of the Chinese flora, I proposed a research project—Study on the Chinese Flora—and applied to the Natural Science Foundation of China (NSFC). The committee of the NSFC has attached importance to this project and is about to approve it.² Most participants in this project are the main authors of the FRPS. I believe that our colleagues from Hongkong and Taiwan will also be interested in this project. Although they cannot participate in it for the time being, they can observe and comment, and they have academic exchanges with us. We hope that in the near future we can build another milestone in our rich and beautiful motherland and make even greater contributions to scientific knowledge.

Our American friends have given us a lot of help in promoting the development of botany in China. We have exchanged visiting scholars, exchanged plant specimens, and cooperated with each other very well. The joint Sino-American project of *Flora of China* is a typical example. In October of last year under the *Metasequoia* trees at the Missouri Botanical Garden, Dr. Peter Raven and I cosigned an agreement for this joint project. The preparation has proceeded smoothly for almost one year. For example, the project has been approved by the National Science Foundation (NSF) of the United States, and the publication problem has been resolved. Cooperation between the American and Chinese members of the joint Editorial Committee, especially between Dr. William Tai (the project coordinator) and Professors Dai, Lun-kai (acting member of the joint Editorial Committee) and Cui, Hong-bin (deputy editor-in-chief of the FRPS and a member of the joint Editorial Committee), has been very successful. They have made great efforts to reach a mutual understanding by overcoming various difficulties caused by the different customs and systems in our two countries. They have arranged for volume 17 to be a test treatment followed by volumes 15 and 16. They also selected the Chinese and American authors for the remaining volumes and helped these authors contact one another. The authors of the seventeenth volume: Professors Chen, Shou-liang (Verbenaceae), Li, Xi-wen (Laminaceae), and Lu, An-min (Solanaceae) are due gratitude. The first two

² Subsequent to this meeting, NSFC approved the project.

authors have finished their manuscripts. The first product of our joint project is to come out at the end of next year or in the beginning of the year after next. Professors Chen, Shou-liang and Li, Xi-wen have had questions when preparing the treatments. This is the exact purpose of the test treatment. We can discuss these problems at this meeting and modify the author's guidelines accordingly.

We realize that it will be a very complicated process to accomplish this monumental work. It will involve many people and many related projects. Every plant family has its own characteristics, and every author will have questions. According to our experiences, the authors' guidelines need to be modified as the writing continues. We need overall regulations on how to cooperate with each other and how to translate and edit the *Flora*, and both sides should abide by them. At the same time, we should be flexible and try to solve specific problems with specific methods under the direction of the joint Editorial Committee. We should also have regulations on how to regulate loaning and collecting specimens and gathering references. These questions should be discussed at this meeting. The Editorial Committee of the FRPS has an office in Beijing. This office is also responsible for the work of the Chinese side of the joint Editorial Committee.

It is a pleasure to meet Professor Paul Butt of the Chinese University of Hongkong at this meeting. It is unfortunate that our colleagues from Taiwan have not been able to meet with us in Guangzhou. But we welcome our colleagues to come to the mainland for visiting or research at any time. We also hope that we can visit Taiwan someday. I have been conducting floristic studies for many years and have visited every region in China except Taiwan. It will be a pity if I cannot visit there in my lifetime.

We would like to thank the host—the South China Institute of Botany at Guangzhou, particularly Professor Lin, Yeou-ruen, who arranged everything necessary for the meeting in a very

short time. Although the meeting could not be held in Hongkong as planned, we give our sincere appreciation to Professor Paul Butt and Professor Chang Shu-ting, his department head, for their excellent preparations for the meeting.

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